

A Short Note on Loving Kindness Mantras

The particular wording of mantras for Loving Kindness will change, depending on the teacher. The most important thing is to find a particular wording which works for you. This may change over time. Generally speaking, three mantras are used, which go along the lines of:

- May I be happy;
- May I be free from suffering;
- May I take care of myself, happily.

These three will cover the essence of the practice. In particular, the line “may I take care of myself, happily” works to remind us that we are on a path of self-help. It also shines a light on the fact that we can walk the path happily – this works as an antidote to seriousness. As we use this practice over time, the very same words will often take on new meanings. Regular use of this practice will also bring any internal resistance regarding our own happiness, into our conscious awareness. Any tendencies that manifest as internal negative chatter will eventually become known to us, and uprooted. This practice allows us to get to know those unwholesome tendencies that usually exist beyond our conscious awareness. As our understanding of these unwholesome tendencies deepens, letting go of them happens naturally. We may find some tendencies to be more stubborn than others, this is normal.

As we move from developing loving kindness for ourselves to radiating loving kindness outwards towards others, four steps are recommended:

1. Loving kindness for those that we know who are dear to us;
2. Loving kindness for friends;
3. Loving kindness for those we have neutral feelings for; and,
4. Loving kindness for enemies or those that we find difficult to love.

These graduated steps allow us to strengthen and increase our loving kindness for others in a slow and lasting manner. Ultimately, allowing us to develop loving-kindness for all beings, regardless of any ideas or judgements we may have.

We use the same mantra structure that is used for self-loving kindness, simply replacing “I” with the particular being or group of beings that we are working with.

It is normal to go back and forth between self-loving kindness practice and loving kindness practice for others - there is no hard rule here as to how this practice will play out for each individual.

Enjoy finding mantras that work for you.

Enjoy finding a way of practice that works for you.